

**ANNUAL QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT FOR
CARDIFF COUNCIL FOSTERING SERVICE (01.04.2018 – 31.03.2019)**

Introduction & Background

The purpose of this report is to provide a review of the quality of care offered by the Cardiff Fostering Service during the period 01.04.18 – 31.03.19 in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 42 Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003. The report provides information regarding quality and the monitoring of matters set out in Schedule 7 and Schedule 8, and the quality of the services being delivered. The report is produced to provide children, parents, foster carers, elected members, staff and other professionals with a review of the Cardiff Fostering Service.

The next Quality of Care Report will need to be produced - as now required under the Local Authority Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2018

This Report has been collated with contributions from Children and Young People, Foster Carers, Social Workers, and Managers from across Children's Services

Contents:

Part 1: Feedback from Children and Young People, Social Workers, Foster Carers, and Applicants, Evidence of Outcomes.

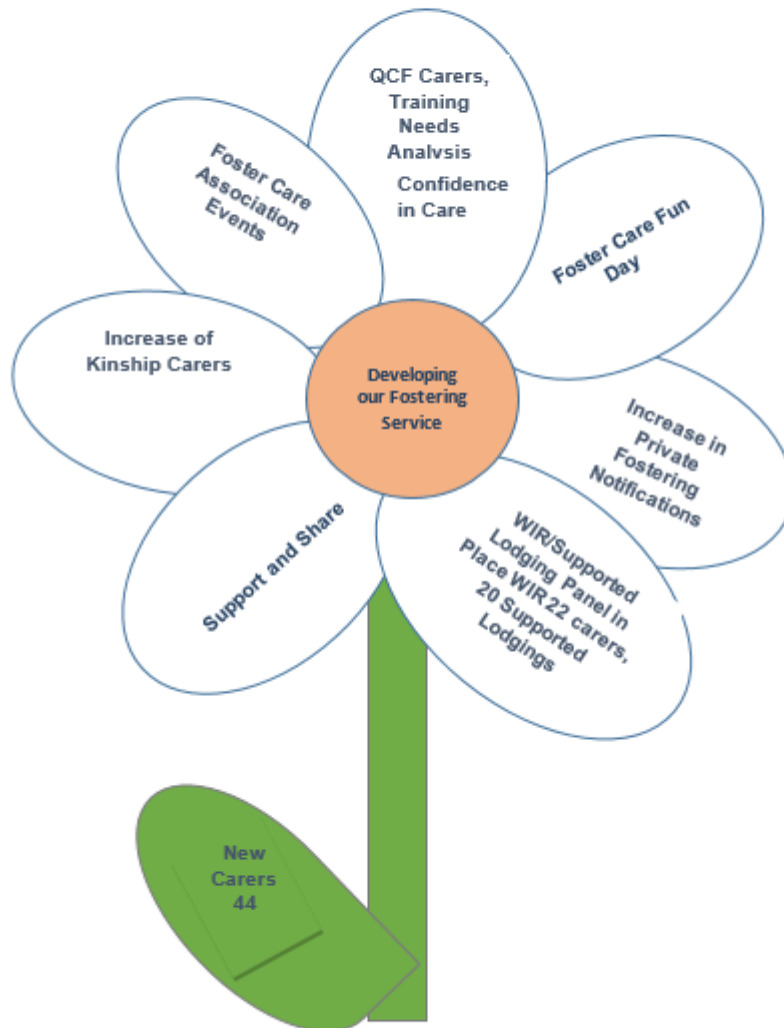
Part 2: Service Overview

Part 3: Information of performance in relation to the monitoring of the matters detailed in Schedule 7 and Schedule 8 of the Local Authority Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003.

CONGRATULATIONS

Cardiff Fostering Services

Achievements for 2018/19



Improvements made during 2018 – 2019:-

- Survey Monkey used to gain feedback from staff , Carers and Young people
- Robust Statistical information collated
- **Recruitment:** Continued profile raising through Social Media
- **Training:** We engaged with our carers starting the year with a training needs analysis, which then informed the program of training and development for the year. This included Team and Panel training, and a series of Support and Share workshops facilitated by carers for carers. Promotion of Confidence in Care, QCF and bespoke training for Kinship carers and training delivered at times and venues for ease of access to our carers.
- **Foster Carers Association:** We are proud that our Foster carers continue to have their own Foster Carer Association. The FCA organise social events and can act as a Consultation group. Last year saw the development of Peer support and development of more informal support networks for carers.
- **Male Carers Support Group:** A successful group that currently meet on a quarterly basis.
- **Quarterly Newsletters**
- **Celebration event:** Each year we hold a Celebration of Foster Carer and Service Achievements , we also take the opportunity to Launch the next Confidence in Care program.
- **Summer Fun day:** held at Insole Court in August '18 and the weather was kind to us, activities included No Fit state Circus and Music workshop, facepainting and manicures.
- **Assessment Practice Group:** Improving practice in Assessment revising templates to ensure safety and quality. Implementing Signs of Safety. Improving Foster carer's recording and reporting at LAC Reviews ,
- **When I am Ready and Supported Lodgings :**
The amalgamation of the Supported Lodgings and When I am Ready arrangements within the Fostering Service.

PART 1

Part 1 of this report provides information in relation to the way in which the Fostering Service ensures that a quality service is being provided.

1. Quality of life of children, promoting quality of care within the child's placement .

1.1 Children's Views Survey Monkey Feedback from Children 2018/19

Your Life, Your Care 6-10yrs

- (1 participant)
- The participant feels happy living in their home;
- The participant feels safe in their home;
- The participant has had someone explain to them why they are in care but; would like to know more;
- The participant knows who their social worker is;
- The participant trusts their social worker;
- The participant likes school;
- The participant gets to have fun on the weekend;
- The participant doesn't have a pet but would like one;
- The participant has a really good friend;
- Comments from the participant; they would like more contact with their birth family.

Your Life, Your Care 10-18yrs

- 100% of participants like their bedrooms they live in now;
- 100% of participants feel settled in the home they live in now;
- 100% of participants feel happy in the home they live in now;
- 50% of participants don't have a pet but would like one, 33.3% have a pet, and 16.7% don't have a pet and don't want one;
- 83.3% of participants have had someone explain to them why are not able to live at home their parents/families and 16.7% have had someone explain this to them but would like to know more;
- 83.3% say they see their family just the right amount, 16.7% say they see them too little;

Comments on how much contact they have with their birth families;

1. Happy that I have unsupervised contact with my brother and sister, I would like it a bit longer;

2. I would like contact with other family members;

- 100% of participants know they can ask to speak to their Social Worker on their own;
- 66.7% feel included in the decisions that social workers make in their lives all or most of the time, 33.3% said sometimes;
- 33.3% worried about their feelings sometimes, 33.3% worried hardly ever and 33.3% worried never;
- 83.3% said they are getting help with these worries while 16.7% are not;
- 33.3% said they felt very happy yesterday, 33.3% felt happy and the other 33.3% felt okay;
- 83.3% feel their life is getting much better and 16.7% felt there is no change;
- 100% of participants agreed they have an adult who they trust and who helps them and sticks by them no matter what;
- 100% have said that they have a really good friend;
- 83.3% feel happy all or most of the time with the adults they live with, 16.7% said sometimes;
- 66.7% agreed that the adults they live with notice how they are feeling all or most of the time, 33.3% said they sometimes notice;
- 100% of the participants agreed the adults they live with show an interest in what they're doing at school;
- 100% know who their social workers are;
- 83.3% trust their current social worker, 16.7% said they sometimes do;
- 50% of participants said they like school/college a lot, 33.3% said they like school/college a bit, 16.7% said not very much;
- 83.3% said they never feel afraid of going to school/college because of bullying, 16.7% said they hardly ever feel afraid;
- 83.3% said if they felt like they were being bullied they would get support from an adult, 16.7% said they don't get support;
- 50% of participants said they have fun at the weekends sometimes and the other 50% said all or most of the time;
- 66.7% of participants said they sometimes explore outdoors (e.g. visiting a beach or going to the park) 33.3% said they do all most of the time;
- 50% get the chance to show they can be trusted most or all of the time the other 50% said they sometimes get the chance.
- 83.3% said they get a second chance all or most of the time, and 16.7% sometimes get a second chance;
- 66.7% of participants get to practice life skills (cooking, washing etc.) all or most of the time, 16.7% said sometimes, the other 16.7% said never;
- 100% of participants can connect to the internet from their home;
- 66.7% get the chance to do similar things with their friends outside of school/college, 16.7% said sometimes, the other 16.7% said hardly ever;
- 66.7% are somewhat positive about their future and 33.3% are completely positive.

Final comments of participants about being in a foster family;

- I like where I am living. It is better than being at home. I am hoping to go out with friends more when I start high school;
- Foster carers care about you a lot and you get a fair bit of pocket money.

2. Applicant's and Foster carer's views in relation to the service provided

2.1 Feedback from Foster care Reviews:

02/07/2018

'Fantastic team of people doing a wonderful job for the children of Cardiff – very professional at all times'

01/08/2018

'My last review was one of the best I have had during my 13 years as a foster carer. I felt I was being listened to and was given advice and not rushed, lasted longer than any I have had in the past, Thanks to team manager and social worker.'

25/08/2018

'Find everyone we come into contact with very professional and not just bed spaces thought given to right placement.'

04/10/2018

'Everything about the fostering service is good and we are always happy working with them and we have a really good support worker who is always very helpful'.

The feedback we receive demonstrates positive outcomes for children and young people; but also demonstrates that the service puts a high value and focus on services to Foster Carers and applicants.

Cardiff Fostering Service strives to engage with children and young people on an individual basis to ensure their wellbeing. We work in partnership with our carers and promote a high quality service.

2.2 Compliments about Carer or Fostering Service

11/04/2018

The parents offered their opinion on the placement and care that he received from foster carer (unprompted) mother stated that she "could not have asked for a better person to care for him. Social Workers' overall view of placement was that he received excellent care in the placement and as said, was very impressed by her ability to work with the parents.

14/06/2018

"I chaired the annual review for the carers yesterday. I wanted to highlight the extremely positive feedback provided about the care given which was received from allocated Social Worker. Her view was that they are excellent carers, they go above and beyond to ensure that needs are met. They enjoy lots of activities together including swimming. Are extremely caring and are brilliant at supporting birth mother also, making contact a positive experience. Significantly in a further email recorded that she wanted to ensure she provided feedback for 'such excellent carers!'"

I thought I would highlight as I know that you will be looking for comments for the Reg 42 report and as it is lovely to hear the positive impact and difference these carers as a fostering family (including back up carers) are having to his life. Crucially their child focused and decision making in his interest was very apparent as sadly his adoption link had broken down and the couple had to go to significant lengths as a fostering family / cost to be able to include him in the holiday that had been planned for after he was due to move on.

27/06/2018

I was today sent the judgement and just wanted to let you know that the High Court Judge was extremely complimentary about foster carers, they are described as remarkable carers and they are thanked on behalf of the Court for the support and care they have provided. They may have received this feedback within the court arena but I just wanted to flag it.

14/09/2018

I just wanted to let you know what an amazing job carers did with child placed with them over a year ago. She was rehabilitated to her father care following the court hearing. This has been a very long and difficult process that would not have been done without the support and assistance offered by both carers they have worked tirelessly in preparing for her return, and supported her father throughout the process, they always had her best interest at heart and advocated for her throughout. I am positive that without their support and hard work over the last six months the transition may not have been successful and she would not have been able to return to her home and family. So I just wanted to say thank you and let you know what amazing carers they have been for this little girl.

03/10/2018

I chaired carers Annual Review this week. The feedback from Social Worker Looked after Children 0-14 Service dated 13.9.2018 was extremely complimentary above and beyond other feedback I have read recently. A key part to highlight was

"Carers met child care plan to the letter. They met her needs to an excellent standard. Promoted and supported contact. Developed positive relationships with parents, and professionals alike. Their contribution to the developmental improvements that this little girl is making cannot be underestimated. They know what they are doing and why. They have provided her with the best start that she

could have, having had one of the toughest beginnings. Thank you both. I look forward to working with you again”

15/10/2018

I just wanted to formally recognise these foster carers. They have recently moved on a little boy to adopters and they have been instrumental in making this transition a successful one.

They have demonstrated an amazing commitment to this little boy, even to the extent of ensuring he attended their recent holiday when the previous match fell through. It wasn't straightforward to get him booked onto the holiday and caused them several days of phone calls etc! They were determined though and would not consider a respite placement as they did not feel this would be in his best interests.

They formed a positive relationship with his birth mother and gave her support and sympathy whilst remaining professional. They have kept birth mum up to date with his progress and made her feel included by providing photos and videos for her to keep. Carer even attended to support the birth mother and the adopters when they met last month.

I just wanted to pass on this feedback. Carers are outstanding foster carers who I feel have gone above and beyond. Cardiff are lucky to have them!”

30/11/2018

The carer showed excellent insight into the family dynamics and an exceptional focus on her and her siblings. This was demonstrated in her focus on contact arrangements, her interaction with parents (which they both reported as excellent), her links with the school (chasing additional work as soon as a weak area of learning was identified). She was supportive in using this work to analyse the weak areas and support learning herself.

She was also proactive in tracking her enuresis which allowed the group to discuss possible links to contact. Because she has invested time in communication with both parents she was able to discuss this openly and her sensitive approach to the subject allowed us to consider changes needed to contact, because the parents were not defensive and were then able to focus on the possible impact on their daughter.

The carer was incredibly sensitive to the family and this will form a strong basis of acceptance for her within her family network that it is hoped will increase her sense of belonging and positive identity building blocks for the future

05/02/2019

An annual review evaluation form which has been received from foster carers
They have complimented 2 member of staff,

- The transition to a new supervising social worker went really smoothly.
- was a great support.
- is efficient on placements and ensure matching is a priority

Also they have asked if their daughter can be assessed as back up.

18/03/2019

I have been working with foster carers 2 ½ years and throughout they have always been professional and I believe they have the children in their cares best interests at heart. The carers will always update me appropriately and will always ask for advice/guidance where appropriate. I view them to be great advocates for the children and they have worked hard to ensure that they feel a part of the family. Both carers have an excellent relationship which is lovely to see. They promote age appropriate activities and specifically, they have worked hard with her to encourage positive friendships, which have on times, been very difficult and involved challenging the school where appropriate. I feel this highlights their commitment as well as their professional and advocacy skills development. They have evidenced their sheer commitment and resilience over the past few months considering the challenges they have faced. They never ask for support but rightly so, they did in this instance due to the severity of the issues. However, throughout the challenging few weeks, they both did everything they could and went over and beyond what would be expected of any foster carer. I feel that the carers fully view her as their family and it is clear for all whom are involved. Considering all that these carers have faced recently, their hard and persistent work with looked after children needs to be recognised and commended. I have no concerns whatsoever and believe that the children in their care are having their needs met to an excellent standard. It is a pleasure to work with them.

2.3 Views of foster carer's children and other household members.

"From day 1 living in my 'Fostering' household was home. It's a place of safety and security, something myself and many others hadn't experienced before. Being accepted into loving family and being treated no differently has changed and saved my life. If I hadn't come here, I dread to think where I would be today. Having been adopted, I now get to experience fostering in another light and it is just the most loving, rewarding lifestyle that I wouldn't change for anything."

"I was happy when my mum discussed with me that she was thinking about fostering because she always wanted to and I knew she would be good at it. When he arrived at our house I knew that he would fit perfectly. He has become a part of our family. It has been an amazing experience to have a little baby in the house. I am really enjoying having him in the house."

"I like looking after babies and playing with them. He likes me going into the ball pit with him. He is always happy and I like to feed him his bottle and help mum."

"I like looking after babies and helping and I am sad when they leave"

2. Evaluation forms of Foster Carers 2018

- 94% of participants have been regularly visited by their supervising Social Worker;
- 94% felt they had received appropriate support from their SSW. (Comments on this question)

1. Fantastic team of people doing a wonderful job for the children of Cardiff, very professional at all times;
2. My last review was one of the best I have had during my 13 years as a foster carer, I felt I was being listened to and was given advice and not rushed. Lasted longer than any I have had in the past.
3. I would like our daughter properly assessed as our back up carer if possible so it is clear to all parties involved what she is fully able to help out if needed;
4. Communication could sometimes be better.
 - 94% gave an excellent rating to reflect the quality of support they've been provided with, 6% said above average.
 - 94% have been regularly visited by the child's social worker (comments on this question)
1. Regular social worker is on long term sick;
2. Previous social worker was excellent but had no contact since she left some months back.
 - 94% have had the child/children placed in their care visited in accordance with the statutory regulations;
 - 25% have needed to use the EDT out of hours service;
 - 13% of those that contacted EDT scored the service as excellent, 13% above average, 74% not applicable;
 - 81.25% have completed training in the last month/6 months;
 - 38.46% rated the training as excellent, 46.15% above average, 31.25% not applicable;
 - 100% felt they had sufficient help to attend training, Comments from participants on training they would like to see; more mental health courses, self-esteem and confidence building in children courses, PACE,FASD, Adoption, moving on, babies in withdrawal;
 - 94% felt that they received sufficient information regarding fostering/the Fostering Service (Support groups, letters, website, newsletters);
 - felt the quality of this information 56.25% excellent, 43.75% above average;
 - 31.25% have requested equipment since their last annual review;
 - Of those that received equipment 80% felt the standard/quality of the equipment was excellent and 20% above average, (68.75% - those who did not receive equipment;
 - 94% are aware that there is a complaints procedure;
 - 100% have not felt the need to raise a concern about the service;
 - 43.75% wanted to compliment the Fostering Service, 37.5% did not, 12.5% not answered;
 - On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the most positive an average overall score of 8.88 was given for how participants rated their experience of the Cardiff Fostering Service;

PART 2

Over view of Services delivered

Recruitment:

The process of recruiting foster carers to the service begins from the moment a prospective foster carer 'discovers' the service. Through the various stages of the process there is a need to be 'customer-focused' to build confidence in the agency from the outset and enhance the likelihood if approved, that foster carers will advocate for the service.

When it comes to increasing awareness of the fostering service, there was evidence that previous Cardiff Cares campaigns have had a positive impact. Significantly, use of social media has driven up traffic to the Cardiff Council Fostering website and increased levels of enquiries. The campaign was paused in January 2018, and there was evidence of more people choosing to foster with Independent Agencies and less choosing the Council's offer and the Children's Placement Board therefore directed in autumn 2018 that the Communications and Media Team reintroduce the Cardiff Carers Recruitment Campaign. The overarching theme of the recruitment campaign has been 'Thinking of Fostering? Think Cardiff Council', which is a key message consistent with the materials being developed by Narrative Edge on behalf of the National Fostering Framework where a primary objective is to encourage individuals considering fostering to apply to their Local Authorities.

The Children's Placement Board also commissioned a number of mutually complementary work strands, one of which was to ensure that there are sufficient resources in place to give the Fostering Service the best possible opportunity to convert enquiries into Cardiff Council Foster Carers. The other is the development of the Cardiff offer and incentives.

A programme of activity was delivered specifically targeting those already fostering with Independent Agencies, those considering fostering or those looking for a career who may not have previously considered becoming a foster carer. What has set this round of activity apart is that on a pilot basis, a budget was allocated to fund targeted social media marketing, using detailed characteristic analysis and profiling.

Organic Social Media messaging via the Council's Twitter & Facebook accounts in has taken place raising awareness of fostering and which also advertised drop in sessions / events that the Fostering Service were in attendance of with a view to encouraging members of the public to come to talk to the team about fostering with a view to generating potential foster carer enquiries, this including the manning of stands at Ely and Caerau Festival (July), The Running Festival (October), Cardiff and Christmas Market (November). Additionally, a Fostering Information Evening was held March 2019 targeting individuals who had responded to a Budget Consultation question where individuals were asked if they would wish to have further information about fostering. The event was also publicised via partner

agencies targeting those already working within the public sector including the Police and Health Service. Promotion of events on social media has had some positive impact with some individuals specifically saying that they had attended events because of seeing a feature on Social Media.

Internal communications channels have continued to be utilised which included inclusion of a feature on the Cardiff.gov.uk homepage carousel, Councillor E-briefing, in the spotlight feature and articles in the Council's Core Brief. External communications activity also took place in the form of radio advertising with Capital Radio targeted to Fostering Fortnight featuring foster carers who had transferred from the Independent Sector.

Positively, a partnership has been developed with the Into Work Services to directly reach those looking for a career. The Fostering Team has briefed the Into Work Service Staff Team, attended Job Fairs and held a monthly recruitment / drop in session on a rotation basis at Council Hubs.

A light touch refresh of the current Cardiff Carers website has been undertaken including the rewards and benefits page as activity on the website had demonstrated that this is the most popular page.

In 2018-2019, the Service ran five Skills to Foster Programmes April 2018, July 2018, October 2018, January 2019 and March 2019.

2. Training:

A wide menu of specialised training continues to be available alongside the mandatory required training for Foster Carers. The annual calendar was available in March allowing carers plenty of time to plan training into their schedule. There is a mix of classroom, support groups, twilight sessions and weekend training in order to meet the needs of the service. Training has been well attended with an ongoing improvement on last year's figures. We have seen a positive increasing rise in kinship carers attending training.

Support and Share sessions continue to be popular and well attended. Sessions are facilitated by carers; for carers. A range of planned topics are discussed, feedback at the end of each session is facilitated by training and fostering representative and passed to relevant services/agencies if any action is required.

A 'Preparation for Placement' workshop has been devised to bridge the gap of time and training, between foster carer's approval, and their attendance at induction training. It enables the sharing of key information and knowledge they need in the early days when a child is first placed. The workshop is suitable for mainstream and kinship carers, it has been well evaluated. 20 carers have attended this workshop to date, with a large percentage being kinship carers; this has contributed to an early engagement with training, resulting in a willingness to attend further training sessions.

A 3-day Induction Programme for newly approved carers continues to run 4 times throughout the year, this is coordinated as a regional approach. Cardiff have devised and run 7 - kinship carers Induction Day courses, 54 carers have attended to date, this is facilitated in house and well evaluated.

The lottery-funded training, Confidence in Care Programme is 12 days learning and reflective practice over consecutive weeks. This continues to be making a large impact on practice, providing a tool kit of strategies to use when working with children and young people. The first course ran in 2016 since then 43 foster carers and 8 team members have completed the course to date. Within those figures includes 8 kinship/connected carers. Courses are delivered annually and a mix of 12 carers and 2 staff will start the fifth and final round of fully funded training in January 2020. To keep the concept of support, and the contents and skills/techniques learnt during fostering changes, Cardiff provides quarterly support groups for each of the four groups who have completed the programme. These are facilitated in house and are well attended.

Survey Monkey was used to invite all foster carers to evaluate last year's training and support and to contribute and feed into the training plan for the forth-coming year. 35 carers responded which was a vast improvement on previous years.

An internal framework for foster carers learning and development has been devised in the model of a 'Continuous Professional Development Portfolio'. These are currently being introduced to carers by their supervising social workers on a monthly basis.

3. Connected Persons/ Kinship:

Kinship foster care is a formal arrangement where a child is looked after by the Local Authority and placed with a relative, friend or connected person. 'Relative of Friend' is defined as a: grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of the full blood or by marriage), step-parent, or friend of the child; A 'Connected Person' is anyone who has a pre-existing connection to a child through his or her extended network.

There continues to be an increase in the numbers of assessments undertaken on 'connected persons' who are put forward to look after Cardiff children. This in turn has had a significant impact on the number of cases presented to Cardiff's Foster Panel and has implications for the supervisory capacity in the Fostering Service. This trend is going to continue as connected persons carers are a major growth area due to PLO and the requirement to look within a Child's own family network when initiating proceedings.

Resources to undertake assessments still remain with the Children in Need teams as the fostering service does not have the capacity, but the supervision of approved 'connected persons' remains within Cardiff's fostering service and continues to be a main area of activity during the year. It is predicted that the number of connected person's carers will surpass the number of mainstream carers by the summer of 2019.

Increasingly, many new connected person's carers are not fully prepared for the role they are taking on in caring for children who have experienced trauma. The increased support required to many connected persons has evidenced a resource implication for the fostering team in providing an appropriate level of support

Whilst any placement with natural family is seen as beneficial for a child this also needs to be consistent with the welfare of the child concerned and based on permanence or long term planning.

4. WIR / Supported Lodgings:

WIR

Previously, young people have continued to live with their foster carers under a person specific supported lodgings arrangement. However, following the implementation of the Social Services and Well Being Act (Wales) 2014 in Wales, the 'When I am Ready' ('WIR') scheme is now in place to enable care leavers to continue to live with their former foster carers under a different arrangement once they turn 18 years of age. These proposed arrangements are presented to Cardiff's When I'm Ready panel for consideration. As of the 31.03.19 Cardiff County Council currently have 22 such arrangements, which are aiming to provide further stability and positive outcomes for young people.

Supported Lodgings

The Supported Lodgings Scheme is a form of temporary supported accommodation for vulnerable young people who are not ready to live independently for a variety of reasons. It is expected that the scheme will provide places for care leavers aged 16 to 21 years, Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers or one of the accommodation options for young people who present as homeless to the Authority. Young people placed on this scheme will have their own room within the Supported Lodgings provider's home and be given support by the adult or adults in the home to develop independent living skills. Supported Lodgings providers are assessed, presented to Supported Lodgings Panel and approved by Cardiff Council to provide safe and friendly accommodation within a family home.

As of the 31.03.19 we have 20 approved supported lodgings providers, with 19 young people accessing a supported lodgings placement.

5. Private Fostering:

The fostering service has used various strategies to raise public awareness of private fostering throughout 01.04.18 to 31.03.19. These strategies have included:

- Developing a private fostering awareness raising strategy explored with the Council Comms department for 18/19
- Ensure Private Fostering awareness raising information was available on Cardiff Council website and reviewed regularly
- Actioned monthly Social Media adverts / messages regarding private fostering awareness raising on the Cardiff Council Twitter and Facebook pages
- Provided leaflets and posters about Private Fostering and redistributed to schools in Cardiff
- Provided leaflets and posters about Private Fostering to be redistributed to all Hubs in Cardiff
- Displayed an advert detailing information on Private Fostering in the Cardiff Metro newspaper.

Evidence of the potential reach of the awareness raising is as follows:

- Monthly Facebook posts has the potential to reach 1.9k to 3.4k
- Fortnightly Twitter posts has the potential to reach 86.4K to 87.7K followers (English Tweet) and 2.6K to 2.7K followers (Welsh Tweet)
- The current analytics show that each Facebook post and Tweet has led to visitors on the Private Fostering awareness raising information available on Cardiff Council website. The number of visitors to the website following a Tweet or Facebook post range from 5 to 29 visitors to Website.

Pertinent statistics from 01.04.18 to 31.03.19:

- The Local Authority are aware of 8 new private fostering arrangements commencing.
- 10 private fostering arrangements have ended since 01.04.18. This number is made up of some arrangements already known pre 01.04.18 and post 01.04.18.
- Currently there are 4 known private fostering arrangements open to the Local Authority.

6. Retention:

Retention of approved Foster Carers is a key priority for the Service. Positively, the Service has not lost any carers through them seeking to transfer to another Agency. The Service in terms of retention is aware that for post approval support packages it is crucial to communicate directly, to be involved in decision making and carers have therefore been actively involved on the basis of partnership and consulted on the future service design e.g. involvement with the Service Annual Training Needs Analysis held in January 2018. The Service aims to ensure that all looked after children in Cardiff receive the best possible care, so they can make the most of their opportunities, now and in the future. It recognises and values the demanding and

highly significant role that Foster carers play in providing excellent care and support to our looked after children. We want to strengthen our partnership with registered foster carers to ensure they are fully involved in the development of the fostering service for the benefit of all Stakeholders.

The Service has a Fostering Peer Support scheme where it seeks to link all newly approved foster carers or carers facing a new area of challenge with an experienced carer who acts as a Peer who will be 'on hand' to offer primarily, telephone support. The aim is to enhance the support package provided to new carers with the Peer playing a crucial role on helping to a new carer into both the formal and informal fostering network. Peers have commented that they have valued being linked with other carers have commented that they have felt it rewarding to be involved in supporting new carers to try to improve the outcomes for children.

The Service has introduced a range of training initiatives from induction training for all newly approved foster carers to targeted training for enhanced development and support and share sessions, giving an opportunity to welcome new carers to the City of Cardiff Fostering Service, to share information, introduce key staff team members and to discuss ongoing foster carer development and the benefit from learning about experiences and gaining support from experienced carers. A key change is the development of the Cardiff Foster Carers' Association (CFCFA) and within the first year they have with the support of funding from the Service successfully organised a number of activities hosted a Christmas party; and regularly held coffee mornings which continue to provide a safe environment in which to meet other carers and staff.

7. Performance Indicators In house Cardiff Carers

12.2% returned home from care during the year (Cardiff LAC total 6.2%)

76.2% were placed in Cardiff (Cardiff LAC total 56.6%)

88.6% were placed in Cardiff or neighbouring LA (Cardiff LAC total 76.6%). This PI has changed from last year – no longer 'within 10 miles'.

20.8% were seen by a dentist within 3 months (Cardiff LAC total 35.2%)

84.6% were registered with a GP within 10 working days (Cardiff LAC total 82.4%)

17.2% experienced one or more change of school (Cardiff LAC total 16%)

Developments and improvements planned for 2019 / 2020

During 2019 /2020 there are plans to further develop and improve the service and some specific areas that have been identified:-

- To continue to engage with developments under the National Framework
- To continue to issue the Training and Development Portfolio for carers.
- To further develop bespoke Training for Kinship carers
- To implement the Review of the Fostering Service to enhance Recruitment and Retention.
- To maintain Confidence in Care Support groups as a permanent feature of the service
- To deliver informal Support and Share sessions for carers, and Coffee Meet ups facilitated by carers.
- To Promote the Service at every opportunity

PART 3

This section provides information and analysis of performance in relation to the monitoring of the matters detailed (in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 6 of the Local Authority Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2018) as previously required under Regulation 42 Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Monitoring service delivery

There are structures and systems in place to ensure accountability of service provision and these include regular management meetings, team meetings, and the collation of performance data and feedback for example:-

- Monitoring monthly recruitment statistics;
- Monitoring information about placements and producing monthly reports related to placement / occupancy figures;
- Monitoring via monthly budget reports;
- Monitoring the regular supervisory activities of the workers and managers via supervision, files audits, etc.
- Gaining feedback from the views or comments expressed through the Statutory Reviews of children in placement and via Foster Carer Annual Reviews;
- The work of the Fostering Panel;
- Monitoring of compliments and complaints;
- Issues raised by carers through Consultations and Feedback forms;
- Producing a Quality of Care report on an annual basis (a copy of which can be obtained on making a request to the service).

All of this information is used to assist in monitoring how well the needs of Cardiff's Looked After Children are met by the services being provided. The information provided in these reports also assists the service in identifying areas for improvement.

In addition to our in-house monitoring, the Fostering Service provides data, reports & presentations to the Children's Services Management Team and Council's Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee as requested / required.

Schedule 7

Compliance in relation to each child placed with foster parents, with the foster placement agreement and the responsible authority's plan for the care of the child.

1 Foster Placement Agreements

Compliance in relation to fostering placement agreements for children is currently monitored through:-

- Formal supervision sessions;
- File audits / file spot checks undertaken by the Managers/Senior Social Workers;
- Utilising a monitoring system which we've implemented on our CareFirst computer system i.e. when the Fostering worker completes a Foster Carer Visit they are able to log that a Fostering Placement agreement is required and the system will generate an automatic reminder ('Activity') so that the worker is prompted to chase up the agreement.

2 All accidents, injuries and illnesses of children placed with foster parents.

Accidents, injuries and illnesses are monitored through the 'Register of significant incidents' that is held/maintained by the Fostering Service. The Fostering Service monitors this area utilising 2 categories:-

- **Serious illness or serious accident of a child placed with foster parents (these incidents are reported to the CSSIW)**

Between 01.04.18 – 31.03.19 there were **1** incident(s) of this nature recorded.

- **All Other Accidents, Injuries, Illnesses (these incidents are not reported to the CSSIW)**

Between 01.04.18 – 31.03.19 there were **9** incidents of this nature recorded.

The incidents reported reflect that foster carers and social workers understand the need for reporting incidents and illnesses and any concerns for a child's welfare. The majority of the incidents required no more than low level medical treatment.

3 Complaints about the service

In addition to the information held on the 'Register of significant events' the service keep a Complaints Register to monitor all complaints received.

Serious complaints about a foster parent are reported to the CSSIW.

Between 01.04.18 – 31.03.19 there were **2** complaints about the service recorded:-

The move to managers chairing reviews has meant that carers are raising issues more informally. Also, the Fostering Service has strived to be more accessible via direct contact and newsletters.

4 Any allegations or suspicions of abuse in respect of children placed with foster parents and the outcome of any investigation.

Between 01.04.18 – 31.03.19 there 0 incidents of this nature were recorded.

5 Staff recruitment records are held and a record of required checks for new workers (re: 01.04.18 – 31.03.19) There was a new Business Support Panel Administrator and 2 Grade 8 Social Workers and 1 grade 7 social work. Staff group remained stable.

Relevant checks are undertaken in relation to all staff appointed to the service e.g. DBS, references, relevant qualifications and evidence of social work registration.

6. Notifications of the events listed in Schedule 8

Compliance is monitored through the '**Register of significant incidents**' that are held/maintained by the Fostering Service.

The Fostering Service maintain the register in relation to the events listed in **Schedule 8** but also keep registers in relation to some additional categories/events that it was felt useful for the Service to record/monitor:-

Nature of Event	No. of incidents in relation to this type of event recorded between 01.04.18 – 31.03.19
Death of a child placed with foster parents	0
Referral to the Secretary of State pursuant to section 2(1)(a) of the Protection of Children Act 1999 (1) of an individual working for a fostering service	0
Serious illness or serious accident of a child placed with foster parents	1
Outbreak at the home of a foster parent of any infectious disease which in the opinion of a registered medical practitioner attending the home is sufficiently serious to be so notified	0
Involvement or suspected involvement of a child placed with foster parents in prostitution	0
Serious incident relating to a child placed with foster parents necessitating calling the police to the foster parents' home	2
Any serious complaint about any foster parent approved by the fostering service provider	2
Instigation and outcome of any child protection (CP) enquiry	3

involving a child placed with foster parents	
Allegation that a child placed with foster parents has committed a serious offence	0
Absconding by a child placed with foster parents	2
All accidents, injuries and illnesses of children placed with foster parents (in addition to serious illness or accidents which are reported to CSSIW)	9
Use of any measures of control, restraint or discipline in respect of children accommodated in a foster home	0
Any Other Incidents	4

The number of incidents equates to less than a quarter of the total Cardiff Foster Carer population and more than half were low level day to day incidents, that did not require reporting to CSSIW.

The reporting of incidents is discussed at each foster carer visit this needs to remain robust.

7. Any unauthorised absence from the foster home of a child accommodated there.

Between 01.04.18 – 31.03.19 there are **2** incidents of this nature recorded, each was reported to the Police and EDT and the child returned safely.

8. Use of any measures of control, restraint or discipline in respect of children accommodated in a foster home.

Between 01.04.18 – 31.03.19 there **0** incident of this nature recorded

9. Medication, medical treatment and first aid administered to any child placed with foster parents.

All children and young people placed with foster carers are registered with a GP, dentist and optician (if required). Cardiff's foster carers receive training on meeting the health needs of children and young people in their carer, and First Aid training is mandatory for all carers. All Foster Carers should have a copy of the Foster Carer Handbook which provides information and general guidance on health issues. Furthermore, health issues are discussed as part of the supervising social workers regular visits to carers.

Carers are also required to complete a Health Record for all children placed. The Local Authority has performance indicators to monitor health outcomes for Looked After children.

Carers are required to record all details of a child in placement's health (including medication, medical treatment and first aid administered to any child placed with

foster parents). Regular medication / medical treatment would therefore be expected to be recorded by the carer in the child's Health Record.

However, in addition to the carer recording all health related information in the child's Health Record they are also expected to record any irregular occurrences of medication, medical treatment and first aid being administered in their log (duplicate) books.

10. Where applicable, the standard of any educational provision provided by the fostering service.

The Fostering Service does not provide any formal educational provision in relation to children and young people.

However, the Local Authority does monitor the educational performance of Cardiff's Looked After Child population.

11. Recruitment / Assessment data

Please see table below for information in respect of the new applications that were received by the Fostering Service during 2018 / 2019:-

OVERVIEW OF FOSTERING RECRUITMENT ENQUIRES / ASSESSMENTS 2018/2019	
Total No. of Mainstream enquiries =	150
Total No. of Kinship enquiries =	62
Total No. of enquiries that proceeded to Initials Assessments =	45
Total No. of enquiries that proceeded to Full assessments =	34
Total No. Mainstream applicants / carers approved =	10
Total No. Kinship applicants / carers approved =	34

12. Records of Fostering Panel meetings

The Fostering Panel generally meets every two weeks (unless there are exceptional circumstances that lead to it being cancelled or if an exceptional panel needs to be held). Records of all Foster Panel minutes are held on the Fostering Services computer system (and hard copies are placed on the files of applicants and carers).

In the period 01.04.18 – 31.03.19 minutes are held for the following dates (in accordance with all the Fostering Panels held during that period):-

April 11th and 25th, May 9th and 23rd, June 6th and 20th, July 4th and 18th, August 1st, 15th and 29th, September 26th, October 10th and 24th, November 7th and 21st, December 5th and 19th, January 2019 9th, 16th and 30th, February 13th and 27th, March 13th and 27th.

The figures for 2018 -2019 show that 25 panel meetings were held during the year. A total of 127 cases were presented at the panel during 2018 – 2019 (1 of which was an initial reviews of newly approved carers) and of the 127 recommendations made, the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) upheld 70% of the recommendations (which provides evidence that the panel are effective in their role).

The average time taken for the ADM to provide a decision after the Panel date was 8.4 working days which evidences efficiency and timely decision making in relation to the running of the panel.

The Panel Chair and the Fostering Managers / Panel Advisors ensure that the Fostering Panel continues to operate in line with the requirements of the Fostering regulations and Cardiff's policies and procedures.

There are some very positive messages about the efficiency of the Panel and the Decision making. The panel functions well and meets Regulatory requirements. The panel completed training focusing on analysis of risk in complex situations.

The figures reflect that the service continues to facilitate approximately two panels a month, with sufficient number of carers are presented with the necessary information in order that timely decisions can be made.

Consultation about Fostering Panel

Another way in which the service consults with applicants / carers is via a feedback questionnaire for people who have attended the Fostering Panel.

	No. of Responses	Rating of Panel experience on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most positive)									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Foster Carer	0										
Applicants	8									x	
Totals =	8										

In addition to the above data, some examples of the comments received via these questionnaires:-

What was your experience of Panel?

"Everyone was friendly and the informal environment helped take away the nerves."

"Nice, relaxed and friendly"

"Thank you for inviting us to Panel."

"Our experience at panel was very positive. We were made to feel welcome and at ease. It was clear panel has taken the time to understand the case."

"It was excellent, thoroughly explained to us and supported throughout."

"The people on the panel were friendly and made us feel welcome and at ease. Somebody came into the visiting room to discuss what was going to happen, this

was of great benefit. We feel the timing was adequate, not too long in front of panel or waiting for their recommendation."

"We were nervous before panel but put at ease by the panel members who were very kind and came to us before we entered the room."

"Our experience was a nice and relaxed atmosphere. Everybody on panel were friendly and understanding which made me feel relaxed and confident."

"Pleasant."

"Very Friendly and made to feel at ease."

"It was a nerve wrecking experience but overall the process was good. The panel were friendly and their experience and comments were appreciated."

What could Panel do better to improve your experience of Panel?

'Nothing.'

"Felt it was as good as it could be"

"As experience was not too traumatic and panel were welcoming there is nothing more. Maybe Paint the room where you wait and a more relaxing chair."

"No suggestions for improvements."

"Nothing."

"Nothing is was a good experience."

"Felt it was as good as it could be."

"Our Social Worker said laid out the experience to be a little different-it would be good for the invite to show step by step what will happen from the panel's POV."

The information gained via these new questionnaires are reviewed and shared to ensure that feedback (both positive and negative) given is addressed appropriately (and that appropriate action is taken) any issues raised by applicants, carers, panel members / advisors or the ADM are also discussed during the 'any other business' section of the panel and / or at Panel Business meetings.

13 Duty rosters of persons working for the fostering agency, as arranged and as actually worked

The staff in the Fostering Service are able to utilise a flexi time system; their flexi sheets are submitted to their supervisor's to be checked / approved at the end of each flexi cycle and if they are requesting over 3hrs of flexi leave.

In relation to the Fostering Duty system (within office hours) there are monthly rotas for the Duty Workers circulated to the team and any amendments to these rotas need to be agreed by the Managers.

Out of hours support to carers is provided via our Emergency Duty Team (EDT), there is always a senior manager on call that EDT can access to provide advice and guidance if required regarding matters that arise out of hours in relation to foster carers and the children placed with them.

14. Records of staff appraisals.

The procedure for Personal Performance & Development Plans (PPDP) is that they should be undertaken / completed annually but that they are then reviewed on a 6 monthly basis i.e. a Personal Performance & Development Review (PPDR) is undertaken on a 6 monthly basis.

A copy of the PPDP should be held on the relevant staff members supervision file and a record of when they have been completed is also recorded centrally i.e. all staff PPDPs / PPDRs are recorded on the 'Digi Gov' computer system and compliance is monitored by Human Resources (HR) and Senior Management.

During 2018 – 2019 the Fostering Service was 100% compliant in respect of undertaking and completing staff PPDPs / PPDRs.

15. Minutes of staff meetings.

Team Meetings are held once a month; minutes are produced and held on file.